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ABSTRACT

This action research project examined the impact of a program for improving age-inappropriate behaviors that interfere with personal and academic progress. A total of 69 students from 3 elementary classrooms and 2 speech therapy groups were invclved in the research. The targeted population consisted of fourth and sixth graders; students with autism in a self-contained classroom; and 3- through 12-year-olds with moderate mental retardation in a self-contained building, all in central Illinois communities. Inappropriate classroom behavior related to listening, on-task behavior, cooperative learning, and aggression was documented through teacher check lists, parent and teacher surveys, teacher anecdotal notes, teacher and student journals, test scores, and progress toward Individual Educational Plan goals. The intervention consisted of: (1) a parental involvement program; (2) a direct instruction social skills program; (3) a cooperative learning program implemented through curricular units; and (4) modeling and reinforcing appropriate behaviors to reduce aggression. The social skills and cooperative learning programs were implemented through 18 weeks of direct instruction to mixed gender groups of 4 to 6 students. Sessions were conducted twice a week for 20 to 40 minutes each. Cooperative learning activities were implemented in reading, science, social studies, or language arts, depending on the grade. The parental involvement program consisted of curriculum-based take-home activities and a newsletter for the regular education students and weekly "suitcase" activities for special education classrooms. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in age-appropriate behaviors and enhanced academic performance. (Appended are data collection and classroom materials and raw data. Contains 17 references.) (KB)

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IMPROVING AGE APPROPRIATE SOCIAL SKILLS TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Barbara Streitmatter

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

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Abstract

This report describes a program for improving age appropriate behaviors that interfere with personal and academic progress. The targeted population consists of students in three settings. Setting A consists of fourth and sixth grade students in a middle-class, rural community. Setting B consists of a self-contained classroom of students with autism in a low to middle-class urban community. Setting C consists of Trainable Mentally Handicapped students age three through twelve in a self-contained building, in a low to middle-class urban community. Settings A, B, and C are located in central Illinois. The problems of inappropriate classroom behaviors will be documented through teacher check lists, parent and teacher surveys, teacher anecdotal notes, teacher/student journals, and test scores/I.E.P. goals progress.

Analysis of probable causes revealed that the dissolution of the "traditional" family, a lack of parenting skills, and a lack of social skills instruction in the home are contributors to classroom behavior problems. Teachers report a lack of parental support and a lack of training in social skills have also contributed to the problem. Poor role model choices and poor decision-making skills of students contribute to the problem.

A review of solution strategies, suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of four major categories of intervention: a parental involvement program, a social skills program, a cooperative learning program, and modeling and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

Postintervention data indicated an increase in age appropriate social skill behaviors. This increase enhanced student academic performance.

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

The students of the targeted schools lack age appropriate social skills that interfere with personal and academic progress. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes teachers' observation, checklist of the student behavior, and assessment of the students academic performance.

Immediate Problem Context

Site A

The targeted school A is in a small town located in the Midwest. It is the sole public elementary school serving an area covering 75 square miles. The district was established in 1952 for approximately 300 students. The school has had five building additions to meet the current enrollment of 620 students and is considering another addition to meet the increased population and technical needs of its students. The school is a K-8 one story elementary building.

The following information was obtained from the 1995 A & B School Report Card (M. C. G. S. (1995). The average class size is 23 students. The racial ethnic background of the student body is 98.9% White, 0.5% Black, and 0.6% Hispanic. The pupil-teacher ratio is 19.4:1.

The pupil-administrator ratio is 311.5:1. In addition, the per pupil expenditure is $3,531.00. This rates significantly lower than the average spent on the state which is $5,579.00. Low-income students number 16.2% of the total student body which qualifies them to receive free or reduced-priced lunches and breakfast. Students' attendance rate is at 96.5%, while the student mobility rate is 19.4%.

Emphasis is placed on students becoming independent and enthusiastic learners, and the school does its best to meet the students' needs through a variety of programs. There is a full day, every day kindergarten program. In addition, there is a certificated professional who specializes in co-ordinating the gifted, technological, and drug education program. There is daily instruction for all students in physical education and instruction in art and music at all levels. Also, Chapter 1 programs are available to meet at-risk students' needs in math and reading. All students in grades 1-8 receive the opportunity to choose German as a foreign language elective. In addition, the school provides a new computer lab with Internet access, and a fully staffed library. A certified art instructor is on staff for all students and faculty. Project THINK, Science Fair, Algebra I for accelerated math and science instruction are provided for the students. A wide range of educational opportunities are offered including: programs for learning disabilities, Educable Mentally Handicapped, physical therapy, early childhood. Failure Is Not An Option and Bright Beginnings are programs servicing at-risk students. For students who need additional academic instruction, the Failure Is Not An Option program is available to students after school. To meet the needs of working parents, a before and after school Latch Key program is available.

In addition to the academic opportunities available at the school, there are a variety of extra curricular activities available for the student population such as: Scholastic Team, Cheerleading, Pom Pom Squad, Literary Club, Math Counts, Science Club, Rocket Club, Photography Club, Grade 7-8 Chorus, Honors Chorus/Band, Grade 6 Chorus, Grade 5, 6, 7 & 8 Marching Band, IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contests, Flag Squad, Boys' Baseball, Basketball, Track, Girls' Softball, Cross Country, Young Astronauts, and Student Council.

The target school employs over 70 people to provide quality instructional support to its students. In grades K-5 there are three sections of each class and grades 6-8 are departmentalized. The school also is served by four special education teachers, a social worker and psychologist. The Student Assistance Team is available for at-risk students in the areas of health, education, behavior, and attendance. The veteran teaching staff averages 16 years of experience with 39% holding a Masters' Degrees. The building is administered by both an in-house principal and superintendent. The superintendent holds a Doctoral Degree in Education.

The school offers a high quality educational program that maximizes the children's learning opportunities during the formative years. The grades K-8 district structure gives the students opportunity to place primary emphasis and central focus on elementary education. The school has been recognized by the United States Department of Education for "outstanding progress toward excellence in education". In addition, the school is also a national winner in the Outstanding Compensatory Education Recognition Program sponsored by the office of the Secretary of Education.

Community A

The targeted school A community was plotted and laid out on May 26, 1863, by William Davenport, an agent of the Hanover Company. It was incorporated as a village on April 26, 1875. The town was the county seat from 1843 to 1894. The only state landmark in the county is located on the square. This landmark houses the memorabilia of Abraham Lincoln, who from 1844 to 1856, rode the 8th Judicial Circuit to which this community was assigned.

Target school A is in a German community and is 99% Causasian. The community has 2,517 inhabitants, but also offers over 16 subdivisions for those who wish to live or build in a more rural setting. The median household income of the community is $36,400.00. A diverse number of local retail and medical services are offered to support a community of this size. There are a few small local industries, but most residents travel to a nearby city for employment. The nearby city provides larger educational and cultural facilities, a publicly funded junior college, a private university, three large scale hospitals, a school of medicine, and a variety of retail services.

The village functions under the direction of six trustees and the village president who meet twice a month. They are assisted by an attorney, engineer, clerk, and treasurer. The police department has three full-time officers and five part-time members. There is a 25 member volunteer fire department (911) trained in emergency rescue techniques. The grade school is one of four feeder schools for the high school that is located in the village. The village is a largely church supported community where worshippers can choose from the five different denominational churches located in the community.

Current school-community issues include ongoing school improvement inservices in preparation for the state school evaluation. Efforts are being monitored and reported in the local newspaper. A continual competition exists with a nearby school district with test scores and other school achievements being compared by administrators and local school boards. Wide community use of the facility includes many school functions in addition to youth sport's activities, local 4-H chapters, adult recreation, and senior citizen fitness. This fosters a school-community partnership (Census Metamora, 1990).

Site B

School B is located approximately in the center of an urban area in the midwest. The surrounding neighborhood consists of single family dwellings, small businesses, and a public park. The school structure is a large two story building in good condition, with a two story addition added in 1952. The 509 students are housed in 20 classrooms, four self-contained special education classrooms, and three inclusion classrooms. The school houses two of the district's primary hearing impaired classes. The special education program includes an Early Childhood Education class, an autistic class, and three learning disabled classes. The school also houses a computer lab, a library, a music room, an orchestra room, a speech room, a gymnasium, a lunch room, and an office complex.

The average class size is 23 students. The racial ethnic background of the student body consists of 48.9% White, 46.65% Black, 1.4% Hispanic, 2.9% Asian, and 0.2% Native American. The pupil teacher ratio is 19:1 and the pupil administrator ratio is 509:1. Low income students account for 50.1% of the student population based on the families receiving public aid, students being supported in foster homes with public funds, or students eligible to

receive free or reduced price lunches. Student attendance rate is 95.6%, while the student mobility rate is 48.2% (W. W. G. S. 1995).

Program emphasis is placed on the students becoming independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners. The needs of the students are met through a variety of programs. The school houses a before and after school Latch Key program for students of working parents. Extra curricular activities include sign language club, the drama club, an "I Can" program (aimed at building self-esteem in students), and a student council. The school has an active Parent Teacher Organization which holds fund raisers to provide money for the purchase of educational materials, thus enhancing the curriculum. The adopt-a-school business partner provides motivational items for the students and teachers.

The targeted school B employs 28 people to provide instructional support for the students. The average teaching experience of the certified staff is 17 years. Teachers with Bachelors' Degrees comprise 30% of the certified staff; those with Masters' Degree or above, comprise 70% of the certified staff. Support staff includes 22 people.

Site C

The targeted school C is a self-contained special education facility located within a large urban school district. It is one of 32 public educational facilities in the district. The school offers students a comprehensive academic and functional curriculum for the Trainable Mentally Handicapped (TMH) population. The students range in age from three years through 21 years. This age range is based upon Public Law 94-142 which provides for an appropriate educational opportunity for handicapped students.

The facility is a single story, handicapped accessible building. The building encompasses six classrooms, a library, an occupational and physical therapy room, a speech therapy room, a lunch room, a gym, a swimming pool, a greenhouse, a workshop, and an office complex. The building also has a home simulator where students have access to a living room, a dining room, a bedroom, a bathroom, and a kitchen for learning and practising independent living skills. The building is climate controlled to accommodate student medical conditions. The structure of the building is circular with open classrooms around the outer walls. A large playground and grassy area surrounds three fourths of the school.

The average class size is eight students. The racial ethnic background of the student body is 50% White and 50% Black. The pupil teacher ratio is 10:1. The pupil-administrator ratio is 83:1. Low income students account for 71% of the student population based upon those who receive free or reduced price lunches. Student attendance rate is at 95% while the student mobility rate is 2%.

Program emphasis is placed on the learning of independent living skills so the students may become functioning members of the community. The all-day program offers a multitude of activities in the areas of basic academic skills, self-help skills, and functional living skills. Physical education and music are offered as part of the curriculum. An at-risk, pre-school program is available to meet the needs of all pre-K students. Integration opportunities exist for the pre-K and Kindergarten TMH students within the at-risk program. The upper level students participate in the local drug awareness program, community based instruction, and off-campus work sites. The middle level students participate in a Select Elect program with junior high

students from a neighboring school. The school's Adopt-A-School partner is a local nursery where the students go to learn job skills.

The target school C employs 22 people to provide instructional support for the students. The staff includes six teachers, 16 support staff, and one principal. Of the 10 certified staff members, 40% have Masters' Degrees.

Eligibility for placement in the TMH program consists of an Intelligence Quotient of less than 50, psychological and social evaluations, a physical, occupational, and speech evaluation.

Community B and C

The targeted schools B and C are located within a large urban unit district. The unit district serves 16,141 students. It includes four high schools, 12 middle schools, and 14 primary schools. The district also includes one K-8 magnet school, one Early Childhood center, one self-contained special education school, and various special education classes housed in separate facilities. The average class size is 22 students. The district's operating expense per student is $5,556.00, which is approximately $50.00 below the state average.

There are 1,032 teachers within the district. Of the total number of teachers, 23.7% are males and 76.3% are females. The racial ethnic background of teachers is 92.3% White, 7.0% African-American, and .04% Asian. The average years of teaching experience is 13.8 years. Bachelors' Degrees are held by 54.3% of the teachers and Masters' Degrees or higher are held by 45.6% of the teachers. Pupil teacher ratio in the elementary grades is 19.7:1, with secondary schools having a ratio of 18.1:1. Pupil administer ratio is 236.6:1. The average teacher salary is $34,361.00 which is approximately $5,000.00 below the state average.

The district's students' racial ethnic composition is 48.4% White, 48.0% African-American, and 1.8% Native American. Attendance rate for students is 92.1%, student mobility rate is 31.1%, and chronic truancy rate is 4.9%. Students from low income families comprise 53% of the student population. Students of low income families include students of families receiving public aid, students living in institutions, students being supported in foster homes with public funds, or students who are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunches.

The targeted schools B and C are located in a city of 113,500 people. The city presently has a diverse economy. One major, large equipment manufacturing company dominates the city. This company and its smaller non-union companies are still very important to the city; however, a strike at the major company (which lasted a year and a half) did not have a major impact on the city. Presently, the city continues to grow steadily and has added a wide variety of industries. These industries include manufacturing, retail trade, health services and educational services.

The median family income within the city is $33,500.00. The family income for the city ranges from less than $5,000.00 to $150,000.00 annually. The cost of living in the city is well below the national average, although the average cost of new residential homes and resale of homes is above the national average.

The city has areas of poverty, as cities of this size do. These poverty areas affect the targeted schools due to the desegregation policy used by the district. Urban renewal attempts within the city have been largely unsuccessful. Three large housing projects are found within the city. Some of the students from the targeted schools live in these government supported housing projects, while others live in single family dwellings.

The city offers a diversity of recreational, cultural, and academic opportunities. The citizens have access to a large, 20 acre Civic Center for sporting events, conventions, and entertainment. The city includes six parks on a total of 8,362 acres of land. There is an adequate library system, a zoo, and museums. The educational offerings, beyond high school level, include: a major private university, access to a junior college, a division of a major medical school, and a business college. Universities from other parts of the state offer classes in the city (Model Ed. Systems Association, Inc., 1996).

Regional and National Context of Problem

Throughout the nation, teachers spend much of their time correcting negative behaviors, stopping for interruptions, and managing conflicts. Many students in today's society no longer know how to behave in educational settings; it is the lack of these social skills which cause classroom interruptions, and, as a result, academic achievement has declined. According to Costa, Bellanca, and Fogarty (1992), three factors have contributed greatly to the increased number of students who lack social skills: the dissolution of the "traditional" family unit, television models, and an unclear value focus in the schools.

According to sociologists, the strong traditional family setting is diminishing nationally. In today's society, the increase of single-parent, and dual-working-parent homes is on the rise. Because of this, the average amount of one-to-one contact time between a parent and child is now approximately 15 minutes per day (McCabe & Rhoades, 1989). This is a result, in part, of parents struggling to earn money for the family. Therefore, the parents are unavailable to provide, assist, correct, model, and communicate values, expected behavior, and to encourage social skills (Bellanca ,1992).

Although the family structure has changed, it is a small portion of the rationale for students' poor social skills. Television models of anti-social, anti-caring behaviors have filled the void of appropriate positive role models for today's youth. The average child watches four hours or more of television each day without adult supervision or direction. Consequently, poor social skills and inappropriate behavior may be adopted by children and transferred into the classroom (Bellance, 1992).

Because it is the desire of this nation to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, the public schools have attempted to accept a wide variety of values and behaviors. The change or blurring of societal values has left most public schools without a focus on what is important. Students, therefore, are confused and unclear about their expected roles within the classroom (Bellanca, 1992).

Research findings indicate an increased lack of students' social skills throughout the nation. Therefore, it is now left for the schools and teachers to address the problem. When these behavioral issues are formally acknowledged, the result may be students who are better prepared for future academic, social, and occupational endeavors (McCabe et. al., 1989).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The problem identified by the researchers, was that a lack of appropriate social skills adversely affects academic and personal growth. In order to assess this problem, the researchers chose a variety of tools. These tools included: teacher survey (Appendix A), parent survey (Appendix B), teacher interview (Appendix C), teacher journals, and teacher anecdotal notes. A summary of the teacher survey is presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4. Also, a summary of the parent survey is presented in Table 5. In addition, a summary of the teacher interview is presented in Table 6.

Three elementary classrooms, and two speech therapy groups totalling 69 students were involved in the research process. Monthly record sheets were developed by the researchers under headings Check List A - Appropriate Behaviors (Appendix D) and Check List B - Inappropriate Behaviors (Appendix E) to aid in the evaluation process. The elementary classroom teachers and the speech pathologist were responsible for the observation and evaluation of students.

A teacher survey (Appendix A) was distributed to 64 colleagues in the three settings to determine their assessment of appropriate and inappropriate classroom behaviors. Of the teachers surveyed, 27 responded. The survey responses were recorded on two separate Likert scales. The first scale measured the frequency of student behaviors. This scale ranged from numbers one through four, one indicating rarely observed behaviors and four indicating frequently observed behaviors. The second Likert scale measured the extent to which the behaviors were observed. This scale ranged from numbers one through four, one indicating very few students exhibit the behavior and four indicating most students exhibit the behavior. An open-ended question was provided for a written response. The results of the survey can be found in the following tables.

Table 1

Teacher Survey of Students Demonstrating Appropriate Listening Behaviors

	Percent Rarely Observed	Percent Frequently Observed	Percent Rarely Exhibiting Behavior	Percent Frequently Exhibiting Behavior
Eye Contact	26	74	27	73
Following Verbal Directions	37	63	19	81
Appropriate Body Language	37	63	27	73

As shown in Table 1, a majority of the teachers responding to the survey indicated that most of the students in their classrooms exhibit appropriate listening behaviors. Teachers observed listening behavior that included eye contact, following verbal directions, and demonstrating appropriate body language. However, more than one fourth of the students observed rarely demonstrate appropriate listening behaviors. This information would lead one to conclude that teachers would need to spend valuable teaching time redirecting the non-listening students to the current task. This interruption in valuable direct instruction time is detrimental to those students who exhibit appropriate listening behaviors, and who are trying to attend to task. Stopping to attend to disruptive behavior not only reduces teaching time, but also interrupts the concentration of the teacher and attentive students, thus adversely affecting student learning.

Table 2

Teacher Survey of Students Demonstrating Appropriate On-task Behaviors

	Percent Rarely Observed	Percent Frequently Observed	Percent Rarely Exhibiting Behavior	Percent Frequently Exhibiting Behavior
Maintaining Topic	37	63	40	60
Group Participation	43	57	40	60

The information in Table 2 indicates that surveyed teachers observed just over one half of their students exhibiting on-task behaviors which include maintaining topic and group participation. However, teachers indicated that an average of 40 percent of their students rarely

demonstrate observable, on-task behaviors. This lack of observable, on-task behavior would require a teacher to take time to bring the students back to task in order to complete assignments. A relationship seems apparent between this information in Table 1 and the information in Table 2. As stated previously, valuable, direct instruction time is lost when teachers must redirect students who are not on task. This redirection interrupts not only the behavior of the disrruptive students, but also the learning processes of the attentive students.

Table 3

Teacher Survey of Students Demonstrating Appropriate Cooperative Learning Behaviors

	Percent Rarely Observed	Percent Frequently Observed	Percent Rarely Exhibiting Behavior	Percent Frequently Exhibiting Behavior
Group Contribution	32	68	37	63
Maintaining Self-Control	27	73	20	80
Six Inch Voices	39	61	36	64
Taking Turns	15	85	20	80

Table 3 illustrates that surveyed teachers observed a large majority of their students exhibiting appropriate cooperative learning behaviors. These behaviors encompass group contribution, maintaining self-control, the use of six inch voices, and taking turns. However, the teachers observed that approximately one fourth of their students did not exhibit appropriate

cooperative learning behaviors. Once again, the teacher must interrupt instruction time to assist their students in completing an assigned task cooperatively. Therefore, it is evident the students would benefit from direct instruction of appropriate cooperative learning skills. Before students can effectively complete a given task within a cooperative learning format, the teacher must provide direct instruction in these skills.

Table 4

Teacher Survey of Students Demonstrating Aggressive Behavior

	Percent Rarely Observed	Percent Frequently Observed	Percent rarely Exhibiting Behavior	Percent Frequently Exhibiting Behavior
Physical Aggression	86	14	92	8
Verbal Aggression	74	26	85	15
Interruptions	55	45	84	16

Table 4 indicates the inappropriate behaviors observed by the teachers surveyed. These inappropriate behaviors were grouped into three categories: physical aggression (hitting, tripping, pushing, pulling, biting, scratching, and spitting), verbal aggression (inappropriate language, and put downs), and interruptions (talking out and yelling/screaming). Of the three categories, the teachers rated interruptions as the most frequently observed inappropriate behavior. Interruptions in the classroom break the concentration of both teachers and students. Teachers agree that interruptions are detrimental to the learning processes of students.

The final portion of the teacher survey provided an opportunity to complete an open-ended statement, "In my experience, classroom behaviors are/are not connected to academic achievement because..." From the statements made by the teachers who responded to the open-ended portion on the survey, three major categories were identified. First, a large majority of teacher responses indicated a close relationship between academic achievement and disruptive behaviors. As indicated by the teachers, students who exhibit behavior problems tend to, for the most part, score at a lower academic level than students who exhibit appropriate behavior. Also, when the majority of the day is devoted to correcting individual behaviors, a considerable amount of student learning time is sacrificed. Second, teachers noted that when even one student acts out, or disrupts the class, the learning of all students is impeded. The appropriate learning environment is essential to the success of all students. When this environment is continually disrupted by inappropriate behaviors, the academic progress of every student in the classroom suffers. The third most frequently stated concern of teachers was that too much time is spent keeping students on task. As the class moves from one activity to another, or as the students work in small groups, much time is wasted when students do not follow classroom rules and attend to a given task. Therefore, teacher instructional time and student learning time is once again set aside while inappropriate behaviors are redirected. It is significant to note that the teachers of both special education students and regular division students expressed similar concerns regarding their students' behaviors.

In order to obtain parental observations of their child's behavior, a survey was distributed to the parents of the children involved in the program at the same time the teacher survey was distributed. This was an anonymous, voluntary survey presented for parental response. Fifty-one

of the 75 parents who received the survey responded. The parent responses were recorded on a Likert scale ranging from one (never), to two (sometimes), to three (always). The parents were asked to fill out the survey and return it to the teacher. They were assured that their responses would not affect the teacher's evaluation of their child.

Table 5

Parent Survey of Child's Behaviors

	Percent Never Observed	Percent Sometimes Observed	Percent Always Observed
Listening Behaviors	2	79	19
On -Task Behaviors	8	65	27
Maintaining Self-control	8	65	27

As shown in Table 5, a large majority of parents indicated that appropriate listening behaviors are sometimes observed in their children. However, only 19 percent of the parents surveyed indicated that appropriate listening behaviors were always observed in their children. A large majority of parents indicated that their children sometimes maintain on-task behaviors, whereas only 27 percent of parents indicated that their children are always able to remain on task. Additionally, parents noted that a large percentage of their children sometimes maintain self-control, while only approximately one fourth of their children are able to exhibit this

behavior all of the time. Conversely, only a small number of their children are never able to maintain self-control.

The final parent survey response was the following open-ended question: "Are there any behaviors that your child or child's friends exhibit with which you are concerned?" Approximately one half of the parents responded to this open-ended question. Of those parents responding, concerns were expressed relating to children's physical and verbal aggression. In this area, parents expressed most of their concerns about children interrupting others and showing disrespect toward both their peers and adults. Even though the majority of the parents responding were concerned about physical and verbal aggression, some stated children are too concerned with their own physical image, and children appear to be growing-up too fast. Two parents expressed concerns regarding their child's behavior when behavior control medication was wearing off. Therefore, we can conclude that teachers and parents both recognize disruptive behaviors as a detriment to student learning. In order to address this problem, teachers and parents need to work cooperatively to teach appropriate social skills. Within the classroom, this may be addressed through direct instruction of social skills. To assist parents, teachers need to incorporate a home program in their instructional plans.

Probable Causes

The majority of educators would agree that in order to work cooperatively students must demonstrate appropriate social skills. It is also agreed that appropriate social skills are needed in order to function successfully in families, school, community and future work settings. Consequently, the question regarding the cause of inappropriate social skills needs to be addressed within the school setting. Literature has indicated that the following are probable causes of the lack of appropriate social skills in students: poor role models, too much T.V. watching, dissolution of the family unit, lack of appropriate role models, unclear value focus in the schools, lack of appropriate behavior instruction, and lack of sufficient parental involvement in the school.

One probable cause for poor social skills developement would be poor role models and lack of appropriate role models. The modern medium of television, movies, and videos readily provides children with inappropriate role models. While watching today's situation comedies and cartoons, children learn the art of put-downs. In viewing current horror movies and detective shows, children learn to solve problems through the use of physical aggression, even to the point of destroying an adversary. Soap operas provide children with a distorted view of kindness and cooperation. Shows such as "The Simpson's" show a lack of mutual support and caring necessary in a healthy family setting, according to Bellanca (p. 202). As seen in Table 6, the teachers interviewed also agreed that students are negatively influenced by inappropriate role models. The teachers also indicated that of lack of appropriate role models is a probable cause of poor social skills in students.

Table 6

Teacher Interview of Probable Causes for Inappropriate Social Skills

	Yes	No
Poor role models?	24	1
Lack of appropriate role models?	24	1
Dissolution of the family unit?	23	2
Too much T. V. watching	25	0
Unclear value focus in the schools?	6	19
Lack of appropriate behavior instruction?	25	0
Lack of sufficient parental involvement in the school?	25	0

Table 6 illustrates that teachers surveyed think there are several factors that contribute to the lack of age appropriate social skills in students. Out of 25 teachers who were interviewed, an overwhelming majority indicated that among the suggested contributing factors to the problem are the following: poor role models, too much T.V. watching, dissolution of the family unit, lack of appropriate role models, lack of appropriate behavior instruction, and lack of sufficient parental involvement in the schools. The majority of teachers also indicated that one suggested probable cause, unclear value focus in the schools, is not a contributing factor to the lack of students' social skills. We can, therefore, conclude from teacher interviews that our initial hypothesis, lack of age appropriate social skills adversely affects academic and personal growth in students, is supported by colleagues.

Current literature supports the assumption that too much unsupervised television viewing is detrimental to the development of appropriate social skills. According to Benson (1993), persistent viewing of television, and videos can interfere with a student's learning process. As stated previously, teachers who were interviewed agree that excessive television watching is detrimental to the learning process. These children are not spending the necessary time completing school assignments. According to Bellanca (1992), the average child spends four or more hours watching unsupervised television. Thus, inappropriate behaviors and poor social skills may be mimicked . With so much time spent viewing televsion, students do not spend the appropriate amount of time practicing social skills (Fort McMurray, 1993). According to Keefe (1988), deficits in social competance will occur when the social skill is present, but not practiced.

A possible reason for children viewing so much unsupervised television is the change in the family structure. The increase of single-parent and dual-working-parent households are on the rise. Therefore, because so many parents are working outside the home, the one-to-one contact time between parent and child has decreased to approximately 15 minutes per day (McCabe & Rhoades, 1989). This small amount of time between parent and child does not allow the necessary time for appropriate behavior instruction. According to Anderson (1988), if one is to learn to get along with others and work cooperatively, proper social skill instruction must be provided. Kain, Downs, and Black (1988) also state that inadequate parental supervision is a cause of children exhibiting inappropriate soical skills, and as a result schools must fill the gap. Even though Bellanca (1992) states that the change in the family structure

accounts for only a small portion of the rationale for teaching social skills, the researchers' data in Table 6 shows that this may be more of a problem than this author indicates.

Another probable cause for the lack of appropriate social skills is the unclear value focus in the schools. According to Bellance (1992) the rationale for teaching social skills includes the following:

> In pursuit of our nation's desire to provide equal educational opportunity for all who come to the schoolhouse door, the desire to be free of religious influence inside the schoolhouse has caused our public schools to adopt a value-empty philosophy. This in turn has left most public schools without any focus on what is most important for students to learn. As so many studies on school excellence have argued, a school without a focus is like a ship without a rudder. In place of the traditional value focus, an 'every man for himself' philosophy often dominates. In such an environment, young people become confused and unclear. In this state, they learn little about social responsibility, mutual caring, respect, or cooperation. (p. 202)

Although Bellanca(1992) states that unclear values focus in the school is a probable cause for lack of appropriate social skills, the data in Table 6 indicates that teachers at the targeted site d not perceive this as causative.

Even though, the literature did not directly state that parental involvement is a necessary part of social skills development in the school, Anderson (1988), Armstrong and McPherson (1991), and Begun (1995), indicate that homework is an essential element in developing social skills. These authors state that social skills should be practiced not only within the classroom setting, but also within the more natural setting of the home environment. The researchers' data

shown in Table 6 also indicates that one hundred percent of the teachers interviewed see a lack of parential involvement in the school as a probable cause of poor social skills development.

Therefore, as can be seen, the researchers' list of probable causes are supported through literature review. The authors cited have expressed the same concerns as the researchers regarding the reasons for the lack of appropriate social skills development in children. Additionally, the literature supports the researchers' data concerning probable cause.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The learning of age appropriate social skill behaviors is the foundation for academic and personal growth. The use of age appropriate skills assists in the prevention of problematic behaviors that are linked to underachievement in the classroom. It is more beneficial to teach children to behave appropriately than to punish them for inappropriate behaviors. Parental involvement is a critical element in the development of a child's learning process. Additionally, direct and systematic teaching is required to effectively teach social skills. The use of modeling and cooperative learning techniques enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning within the classroom. Furthermore, the instruction of social skills should be consistent with the behavioral needs of the individual students.

A child growing up in today's society will need life tools in order to become a successful, functioning individual. These life tools are known as social skills. The demonstration of age appropriate social skill behaviors will allow the child to participate successfully in family, school, friendships, and community. Also, in order to function in the future work place, the

student must learn and possess the necessary social skills to interact successfully with others. To meet these requirements, the teaching of social competency skills must be an integral part of the educational curriculum. According to Andersen, Nelson, Fox, and Gruber (1988), the general public expects schools tp provide students with a wide range of skills. Most states require that public schools enhance personal growth by offering students the opportunity to acquire academic abilities, vocational skills, and good citizenship. Research also indicates that children have a well-rounded education when they display age appropriate social skills and cooperative learning skills. Academic achievement alone will not guarantee success if the student lacks age appropriate social skills. The school must fill in the gaps by teaching these skills as life tools for the benefit of the student and society (Kain, Downs, & Black, 1988).

Using an educational approach to the systematic teaching of social skills will help students reach their full potential and will enable them to contribute effectively to society . Adopting and using age appropriate social skills is necessary to build character, acquire a strong value system, motivate student development of communication skills, and realize growth in interpersonal relationships. Through the acquisition of appropriate behaviors, students will increase abilities in the areas of problem solving and decision making (Begun, 1995). The National Commission on Social Studies (ASCD 1989) (as cited in Iannaccone, et. al. 1992, p.112) stated, ". . . that teaching strategies be employed to help students become both independent and cooperative learners who develop skills of problem solving, decision making, negotiation, and conflict resolution." Although there is evidence that a great effort has been made to improve student performance in the academic areas using mandated competency requirements, there is very little evidence that a systematically taught social skills curriculum has

been put into place (Iannaccone et. al., 1992). Effective social skills development within the school requires a purposeful, active, and an all-encompassing approach to learning that promotes academic and personal growth. Because children come to school with a variety of skills, interests, and needs, schools must provide a curriculum that will engage all learners. A school must develop a curriculum stressing active teaching and learning methods that promotes a variety of learning styles, and which incorporates age appropriate social skills (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1995).

Deficits in social skills are seen as important factors in the broad scope of the social problems of today's youth. "High rates of violent crime, racial and ethnic discrimination, gang wars, school dropouts, post high school unemployment and crime, teenage pregnancy, teenage suicide, drug and alcohol abuse and general social maladaptation contribute to a nation-wide emergency of unprecedented proportion," (Iannaccone et. al., 1992, p.111). Many teachers express frustration with students whose behavior is socially unacceptable. It is very difficult to teach students who do not display the age appropriate interpersonal skills that would allow them to interact successfully with peers and adults (Andersen et. al., 1988). Jones (1994) stated that students who demonstrate positive social behaviors have more positive interaction with teachers and achieve a higher rate of success. With the problems that are evident in today's youth, it is important that schools take the initiative to intervene on the students' behalf. Through teaching positive social behaviors, the schools assist children to become successful both academically and personally. This assistance would include: learning classroom survival skills, developing friendships, coping with feelings, understanding and coping with aggression in themselves and others. Social skills training effectively and successfully assists students in developing these

skills. This training also assists in building self-esteem, self-control, respect for the rights of others, and a sense of responsibility for ones own actions (Begun, 1995).

The role of the parent is also considered a very important element in teaching social skills to children. The family is the nucleus that holds society together. In the United States, fewer than one in three families can be considered the traditional family with two parents, one working and one staying home to care for the needs of the children and household. According to Fogarty and Bellanca (1992, p.13), "The number of working women, the mobility of the corporate family, the single-parent household, and blended families created from remarriages continue to increase in numbers each year." These facts appear to contribute to the lack of time that parents have to spend with their children and, therefore, affect the amount of social skills training that occurs in the home. In acknowledgement of this fact, Kain et. al. (1988), stated that more and more children are growing up without the social skills necessary to deal with the competitive and demanding world in which they exist. They also indicate that with more students coming from families of working parents and one-parent families, it has become necessary for schools to teach appropriate social behavior to the students.

A 1991 California Task Force (as cited in Rhodes and McCabe, 1992) reported the average length of time that parents and children interact on a daily basis is about fifteen minutes with three quarters of that time being spent giving instructions and reprimands. This leaves parents little time for teaching and modeling appropriate social skills to their children. According to Anderson et. al. (1988), social skills learned in classroom settings should be practiced in other settings. These settings include homework applications and parental observations of specific skills in other environments. This indicates the need for parental

involvement in social skills learning. Without home involvement, the social skills needed in the classroom, and in later life, will be weak or absent in student behavior.

Children who display inappropriate social skills sometimes need demonstrations of targeted behaviors before they can begin to display the desired behaviors. Modeling in the classroom is a technique of showing students, through demonstration, the appropriate way to behave. It is a part of everyday life for children, at one time or another, to determine their own behavior by observing others' actions. According to McCafferty (1990, p. 368), "Family members, peers, teachers, students, mass media personalities, and even strangers can serve as potent models for prosocial behavior." Because it appears that students naturally copy the behavior of others, the teacher can take advantage of this natural learning ability to model appropriate behaviors in the classroom. By providing appropriate models for age appropriate social skills, the teacher can enhance the learning of these skills.

According to the Fort McMurray School District No. 2833 Social Skills Development Activity Manual, there are three main reasons why children might fail to respond appropriately in social situations. These reasons include: the child may be unaware of the appropriate behavior for the setting, the child may know the appropriate behavior but lack the practice of the skill, and the emotional response of the child may inhibit the performance of the desired behavior (Fort McMurray, 1993). Because children often learn better from the demonstration of target behaviors before they begin to display that behavior, modeling activities provide samples of the target behaviors which the teacher is trying to establish. The target behaviors should match the verbal description of the behaviors that are socially successful in the child's environment.

Throughout the literature, modeling has been shown to be an effective technique for enhancing the development of age-appropriate social skills in children. Carter and Sugai (1988, p. 68) stated, "Modeling has been shown to be effective in promoting prosocial behavior especially when (a) multiple models are used, (b) wide ranges of behaviors are displayed, and (c) the observers perceive the models as similar to themselves." The most effective demonstrators of age-appropriate social skills have been found in nuturant teachers and student models who reinforce, expect, advocate, and teach appropriate standards for both learning and prosocial behaviors (McCafferty, 1990).

Although modeling is necessary when teaching appropriate social skills, the students must experience structured practice of each skill before it is internalized. Cooperative learning groups provide a natural setting for the practice of social skill behaviors. Within the classroom, children are assessed on how well they demonstrate social competencies such as: interactions with peers and authority figures, maintenance of friendships, response to stressful situations, and the ability to listen. When children lack these essential competencies, they may be predisposed for failure (Fad, 1990). A considerable amount of research evidence shows that children who learn cooperatively master more academically and demonstrate higher levels of social behaviors than students who learn competitively or individually (Anderson, 1988). Cooperative learning skills will yield future benefits. The short-term benefits include greater learning, better retention of the material, and enhanced critical thinking skills. The long-term benefits include greater employability and career success (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). A person's employability and career success has been directly related to the development of good interpersonal and small group skills.

When working in cooperative learning groups, children are required to work together to complete a task, come to a consensus for responses, and study academic materials (Costa, et. al., 1992). Knight, Peterson, and McGuire (as cited by Anderson et. al., 1988) found that children who use cooperative learning techniques to complete an assignment tend to develop trust, and self-confidence. Cooperative learning skills of collaboration, conflict management, leadership, and communication must be taught in a systematic way in the classroom. These skills are not acquired only through exposure, but must be taught directly and intentionally. There are five essential cooperative learning elements that should be incorporated into each lesson. The elements, as stated by Andersen et. al. (1988, p. 5), are as follows:

1. Face-to-face small group interaction.
2. Positive interdependence, with each person intimately involved in the task and responsible for the results.
3. Individual accountability to assure all learn the material.
4. Direct teaching of collaborative / social skills and opportunity to practice the skill.
5. Academic and social feedback for the groups during the session.

Once these essential elements are established within the cooperative learning groups, students will display more complex social behaviors such as taking turns, sharing ideas, compromising, and producing higher quality products.

While working in cooperative groups, students learn to interact with their peers outside the school setting. When students interact with fellow classmates, they observe the behaviors those classmates exhibit. Although direct instruction of appropriate cooperative learning techniques by the teacher is necessary to establish age appropriate skills, it has also been found

that students will learn from each other. Consequently, student modeling of a skill is often a more effective tool in teaching than is adult modeling. Peer feedback and reinforcement are also more meaningful than adult feedback and reinforcement (Carter & Sugai, 1989). Therefore, it is evident that direct instruction of cooperative learning techniques must be given before students can be considered appropriate role models for their peers. It becomes the job of the teacher to provide this instruction.

In a non-cohesive classroom, one which does not use cooperative learning techniques, low-achieving students receive little social acceptance, are more aware of their low social status, and are likely to drop out of school. When they are allowed to work in a cohesive classroom using cooperative learning techniques, their academic interest increases, acceptance increases, and their school performance increases (McCafferty, 1990). According to Jones (1994), students who demonstrate positive social behaviors receive more positive interaction with teachers and achieve a higher rate of success.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of implementing a social skills development program during the period of September 1996 through January 1997, the targeted students will increase listening skills, on-task behavior, and cooperation; and decrease physical aggression, verbal aggression, and talking out behaviors as measured by teacher anecdotal notes, teacher checklists, test scores or I.E.P. performance, and student journals.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Teaching materials and data collection techniques will be developed to impliment social skills instruction and to assess student behaviors.

2. Materials and activities will be developed for a parental involvement program.

3. Direct instruction techniques will be developed to implement the social skills program.

4. Curricular units will be constructed and cooperative learning techniques will be employed.

5. Materials will be developed to reduce aggressive behaviors through modeling and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

ACTION PLAN FOR PROJECT INTERVENTION

I. Social Skills Program

A. Groups

1. mixed gender
2. 4-6 students
3. homogeneous and heterogeneous groups depending on classrooms
4. assign base groups
5. direct instruction two time per week, twenty to forty minutes per session for 18 weeks

B. Targeted behaviors

1. listening
   a. eye contact
   b. follow single/multiple step directions
   c. demonstrate appropriate body language
      (1) model
      (2) role model
   d. materials
      (1) Listening in Room 14 series
      (2) Ready-to-Use Social Skills series
      (3) teacher made materials and activities
      (4) Social Skill Strategies program

2. on-task-behaviors
   a. maintaining topic
      (1) verbal cues - teacher will give verbal reminders
      (2) hand cues - teachers will give hand signals
   b. group participation
      (1) fourth grade
         (a) individual jobs
         (b) group check lists (see Appendix F)
      (2) sixth grade
         (a) individual jobs
         (b) student assessment rubric (see Appendix G)
      (3) special education classroom
         (a) individual jobs
         (b) wrap-around

3. cooperative learning
   a. establish guidelines for work in groups (forming)
      (1) 6" voices
      (2) listen to others (group members)

(3) stay with the group
(4) do your job
(5) help each other
(6) use wrap-around techniques
(7) complete assigned tasks
(a) regular division classrooms
- student check list (see Appendix F)
- stay on task
- check for work completion
- assignment sheet/log
(b) special education classrooms
- verbal praise
- tangible reward

b. curricular areas
(1) fourth grade
(a) Reading (see Appendix H)
- 3-4 time a week
- reading groups for the current book
(b) Science (see Appendix I)
- one time a week
- science groups during hands-on experiments
(2) sixth grade
(a) Social Studies (see Appendix J)
- one time a week
- research / project
(b) Language Arts (see Appendix K)
- 2-3 times a week
- discussion groups on current story and revisions with partners
(3) special education classrooms
(a) Language (see Appendix L)
- two times a week
- during hands-on activities
(b) Reading (see Appendix M)
- one time a week
- Big Book Club

4. monitor inappropriate behaviors
a. behaviors
(1) physical aggression
(2) verbal aggression
(3) interruptions
b. data collection (see Appendix E)
(1) teacher anecdotal notes
(2) check lists

c. consequences
(1) time-out
(2) redirect

II. Parental Involvement Program
A. survey (see Appendix B)
B. take home activity
1. regular division
a. homework assignments
(1) cirriculum based
(2) newsletter (see Appendix N)
- review previous month
- project next month
- parent comment page
2. special education classrooms
a. suitcase activities weekly - homework (see Appendix O)
(1) parent information letter
(2) teacher planned parent / student activity
(3) activity materials and instructions

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, teacher anecdotal notes and teacher journals will be summarized. Monthly behavior record sheets will augment the teachers' written observations. Students' grades and Individual Educational Plans will be used to further evaluate the effects of the intervention

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase student listening skills, on task behavior and cooperation; and decrease physical aggression, verbal aggression, and talking out behaviors. The implementation of social skills and cooperative learning skills, through direct instruction and modeling, were selected to affect the desired changes. In addition, a parent program was implemented to assist the transfer of learned behaviors. A survey asking about each child's social skill behaviors at home was developed by teacher/researchers. Newsletters to inform parents about the program and encourage transfer of skills from school to home were sent periodically during program implementation. At sites A-1 and A-2, homework assignments were used to involve parents in the program. At sites B and C "suitcase" activities were developed to enhance parent involvement. The "suitcases" included a parent letter, an activity sheet, and all the materials needed to complete the activity. Students and parents worked together on the homework/"suitcase" activities to reinforce appropriate social skills.

An initial observation was conducted across learning environments of students' social skill behaviors during the second week of school. The following week, teacher surveys and

parent surveys were distributed. Base groups were established during the fourth week of implementation and maintained throughout the program. The base groups ranged in size from four to eight students. Each teacher developed age appropriate lesson plans for project implementation. These lessons were presented by the teacher and practiced by the students two times per week, for 15 to 30 minute sessions. Cues for appropriate social skill behaviors were developed and implemented throughout the school day as reinforcement to stimulate appropriate behaviors. Initially, observations of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors were conducted three times per week (Appendices D and E). Due to teacher time constraints, observations were decreased to two times per week.

The skills chosen for direct instruction in base group work were as follows: listening (eye contact, following verbal directions, appropriate body language); on task behavior (maintaining topic, group participation); cooperative learning (group contribution, maintaining self control, six inch voices, taking turns). The targeted behaviors to decrease/eliminate were as follows: physical aggression (hitting, tripping, pushing, pulling, biting, scratching, spitting); verbal aggression (inappropriate language, put downs); interruptions (talking out, yelling/screaming).

Lesson plans for implementing these social skills can be found in Appendices H through M. Social skills were integrated into all subject areas across the curriculum through cooperative learning groups.

The first skill taught and practiced by all students was listening. This was implemented through direct instruction for four to seven weeks. During the first seven weeks of school, site A-1, which consisted of students in fourth grade, implemented appropriate listening skills. The

students and teacher first discussed and determined listening rules that were appropriate for the classroom. A set of the rules was mounted on poster board and all the students and teacher signed their name to the rules, signifying the understanding, need, and agreement for following the rules. This was then placed on the wall at the front of the room as a reminder and reference for everyone. Next, a signal was determined by the students for stop and listen. The teacher clapped her hands three times for "stop what you're doing" and the L hand shape sign was chosen for listening. During this time period, students worked on learning and practicing appropriate eye contact and body language, as well as following verbal directions. An activity was created to demonstrate the importance of not only following verbal directions, but also giving and understanding verbal directions. The students gave the directions for getting to the lunchroom as the teacher wrote them on the overhead. The students then were to perform the directions exactly as written. A similar activity was given for students to use with their parents at home. Following verbal directions was practiced during the remainder of the social skills implementation.

The teacher at site A-2, which consisted of students in sixth grade, spent four weeks teaching appropriate listening skills. During the first week of the listening instruction, the students determined the listening signal for the classroom. The signal for students to stop and listen was turning off the lights. Also, during that same week, appropriate listening rules were developed by the teacher and the students. Base groups created listening rule posters to display in the room. Direct instruction in base groups was given and students practiced eye contact and appropriate body language for two weeks. An observation assignment was given to the students to observe and note the listening skills of family members at home. As a result of this lesson, the

students learned the importance of using appropriate listening skills. As students improved these skills, direct instruction for following verbal directions was initiated. All three of these skills were practiced for the remainder of the listening program. Verbal praise was given to reinforce appropriate skills.

Sites B and C, which consisted of primary T.M.H. students, spent six weeks in direct instruction of age appropriate listening skills. These skills were taught through the reading of appropriate literature, modeling, role playing, and active student participation. The word listen was paired with the ringing of a bell to cue the students to look and listen. Stickers were given as reinforcements for demonstrating appropriate listening.

Cooperative learning skills were integrated during the last two weeks of the implementation of listening skills at site A-1. As needed, the use of six inch voice instruction and practice were introduced, along with maintaining self-control skills. Modeling was used for direct instruction of these skills. As each skill was implemented, the understanding, definition, and need for each skill was discussed. The roles of reader, time keeper, checker/recorder, and definer/encourager were discussed and assigned. Students practiced each individual role of a cooperative group through role playing. A round robin process was used to eliminate the confusion of the progression of roles, with the reader always sitting in the north position in each group. The roles changed daily and everyone had a turn at each role. As improvement was demonstrated in these areas, maintaining topic and taking turns skills were introduced. An impromptu debate was conducted using a national current event episode about an unsportsman like behavior. Students were given a pro or con role and time limits to present their view. After

the debate and a discussion for understanding the debate, the skills of maintaining the topic and taking turns were also implemented during the duration of the program.

The second skill introduced at site A-2 was cooperative learning. Through the use of K.W.L. (what the student Knows, what the student Wants to know, and what the student Learned), charts, role plays, class discussions, student observations, and active student participation, cooperative learning skills were taught. The class discussed the elements of cooperative learning and defined each individual role. The roles defined were recorder, reader, checker, and speaker. Roles were assigned to each group member and practiced within non-curricular subjects. The first two skills addressed were the use of six inch voices and taking turns within the groups. Role play activities were used during direct instruction. As students improved the use of these skills, group contribution and maintaining self control skills were slowly added. After five weeks of practicing cooperative learning skills, off task behaviors were observed by the teacher. To address this problem, on task behavior skills were taught through direct instruction. Again, role plays and teacher models were used to teach students how to maintain topic. Students were also taught appropriate ways for conducting group participation through demonstrations of a passive participant, dominant participant, and apathetic participant. After learning how the various types of participants affect the others in the group, the students demonstrated appropriate individual roles. For the remainder of the social skills implementation program, all skills were continually practiced and reinforced throughout the curriculum.

The next social skill taught at sites B and C was on task behavior. As part of this social skill, maintaining topic was taught through the use of stories, questions, and picture answers. A completion of a puzzle activity was also integrated into the lesson. Students were expected to

maintain the story topic and remain on task during the duration of the assigned activity. Verbal and physical cues were used to help students stay on task and stickers were given for exhibiting appropriate behaviors.

The two previous skills taught at sites B and C, listening and on task behaviors, led to the direct instruction of cooperative learning skills. Individual group member roles were demonstrated and assigned. The students performed the roles of materials manager and encourager. A round robin format was used to allow each student to have a turn. The students were cued to use listening and maintaining topic skills. During cooperative learning groups, the skills of six inch voices and maintaining self-control were modeled by the teacher and practiced by the students. Visual signals were used as cues to remind the students to practice these skills. Cooperative learning was taught through the implementation of a Big Book Club. Each student was responsible for a different aspect in the production of a big book. At the beginning of each lesson, a Big Book Club banner was hung and each student was given a Big Book Club pin to wear during the lesson. The students were reminded throughout the lessons that they must complete their part of the production in order to have a finished product.

All sites completed the implementation of the social skills program within a 21 week time frame. Implementation occurred in a diverse manner depending on the ability level of students. The research was concluded at the end of the 21 week time frame but implementation continues.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effect of direct instruction of social skills on academic performance and personal growth, a weekly tally of student behaviors was maintained throughout the

intervention. Students were observed for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. These behaviors were observed and recorded by teacher/researchers. These data were aggregated by month and are reported in the following figures and tables.

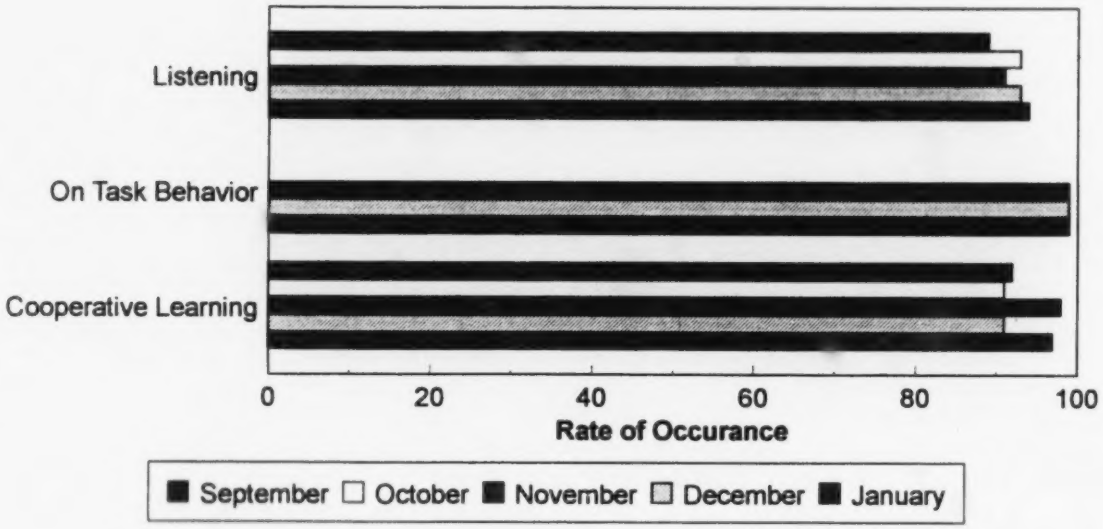

Figure 1. Rate of appropriate behaviors at site A-1 expressed in percentage of time

Figure 1 shows the of students at site A-1 demonstrated, over 90% of the time, appropriate social skills in the areas of listening and cooperative learning during preobservation (September) and postobservation (January) by the teacher/researcher. Listening and cooperative learning skills were documented during the months of September through January. On task behavior was not introduced until the month of November. Therefore the skill of on task

behavior was documented during the months of November through January. In September, three students exhibited appropriate social skills less than 70% of the time (68%, 62%, and 69% respectively) in the areas of listening and cooperative learning. During the postobservation month of January, these three students had increased the use of appropriate social skills to more than 90% of the time (98%, 91%, and 99% respectively). This showed a gain in appropriate social skills of 30%, 29%, and 30% respectively.

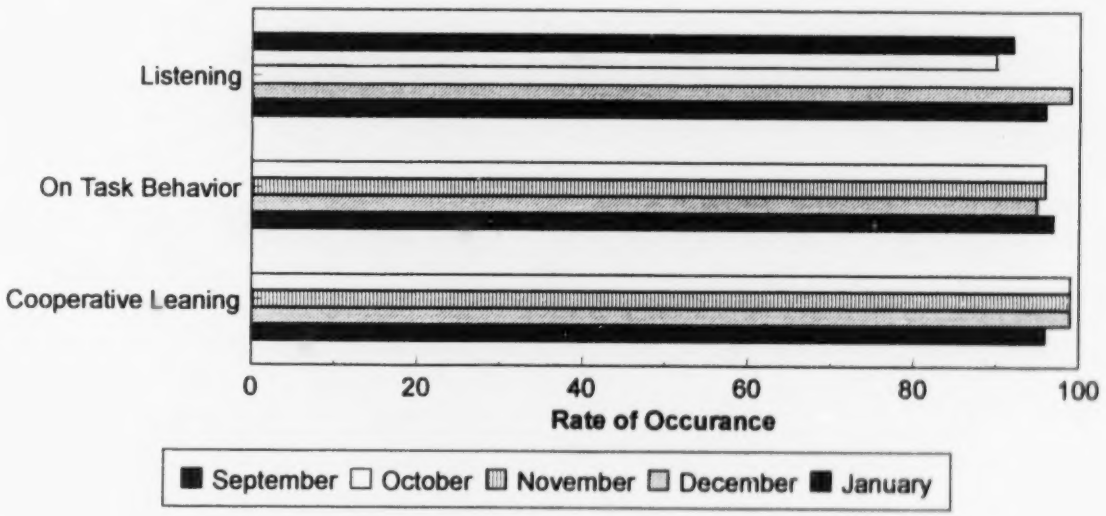

Figure 2. Incidences of appropriate behaviors at Site A-2

Figure 2 shows that students at site A-2 demonstrated appropriate social skills over 90% of the time during preobservation and postobservation by the teacher/researcher. Students made

the most gains in listening skills. Listening skills were taught and then practiced by the students in the months of September, October, December, and January. In the month of November listening skills were not observed because the focus at that time was on task behavior and cooperative learning skills. The on task behavior and cooperative learning skills were not introduced until October. During preobservation, four students exhibited appropriate listening skills less than 90% of the time (75%, 77%, 86%, and 46% respectively). During postobservation these four students showed gains of 25%, 16%, 14%, and 41% respectively.

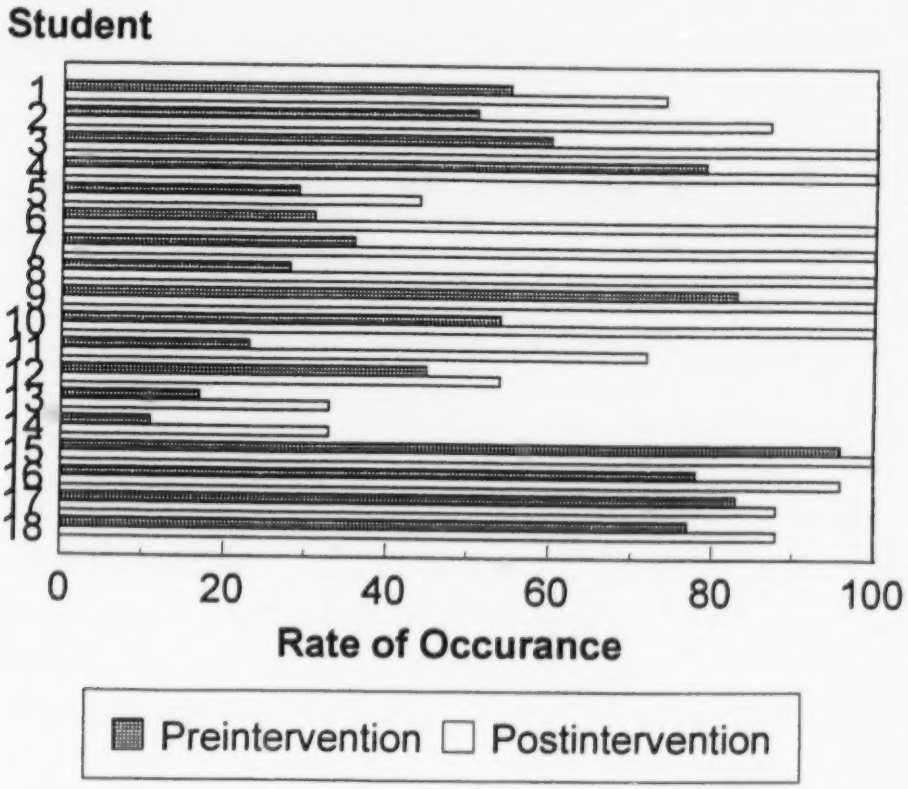

Figure 3. Rate of appropriate listening skill behaviors at Sites B and C, percent of time

The use of direct instruction of social skills at sites B and C, appears to have had a positive effect, as seen in Figure 3, in the area of listening skills. The postintervention observation data showed an increase in listening skill behaviors in all students as compared to the preintervention observation data.

The data in Figure 3 show that sixteen of the eighteen students made considerable gains in listening skills. Although the other two students showed growth, the gain was not as great. These students appeared to exhibit prior knowledge of appropriate social skill behaviors. Of particular note, three of the eighteen students made a gain of 60% or more in listening skills. Teacher anecdotal notes indicated that in dealing with this population of T.M.H. level students, when even one student was not on task, some of the remaining students in the group were negatively affected and did not remain on task. It was also noted that the use of a repetitive cue, in this case the "When I Am A Good Listener" song (see Appendix P), served to redirect the students to use appropriate behaviors for group activities.

The use of direct instruction for on task behavior, at sites B and C, during the months of December and January, yielded no significant gains in this area. The percentage of students who exhibited this skill in the areas of maintaining topic and group participation ranged from 66% to 87%. The teacher/researcher used a round-robin technique during group instruction that required the students to participate during their turn at both the pre and postintervention observation times. The use of this technique facilitated the students to remain on task. Teacher anecdotal notes indicated that students who were exhibiting appropriate behaviors were able to take their turn and therefore exhibited on task behaviors.

In sites B and C, the use of direct instruction of cooperative learning skills occurred during the month of January. The data indicated students were able to use the skills of group contribution, maintaining self control, six inch voices, and taking turns an average of 84% of the time. However, teacher anecdotal notes indicated these skills did not carry over to other educational settings without the presence of the teacher/researcher. Anecdotal notes also indicated that hands on activities for these T.M.H. students were highly motivating and added to their use of appropriate skills in cooperative learning groups.

Table 7

Incidences of Inappropriate Behaviors

	A-1	A-2	B	C
August	0	0	39	23
September	1	1	33	23
October	0	2	18	7
November	59	1	12	4
December	76	0	7	5
January	24	0	3	10

The data in Table 7 indicates the students in site A-1 had a significant increase in inappropriate behavior while the students in site A-2 showed a small increase in inappropriate behavior between the months of August and January. The students in sites B and C showed a decrease of inappropriate behaviors from the month of August to the month of January while in the presence of the teacher/researchers. It is important to note students in site A-1 had a

dramatic increase of inappropriate behaviors in the months of November and December. However, the incidences of inappropriate behaviors were significantly lower in the month of January. The data collection by the teacher/researcher indicated the incidence of inappropriate behaviors at site A-2 were attributable to a single student. These behavior incidences showed an increase beginning in October when this student enrolled.

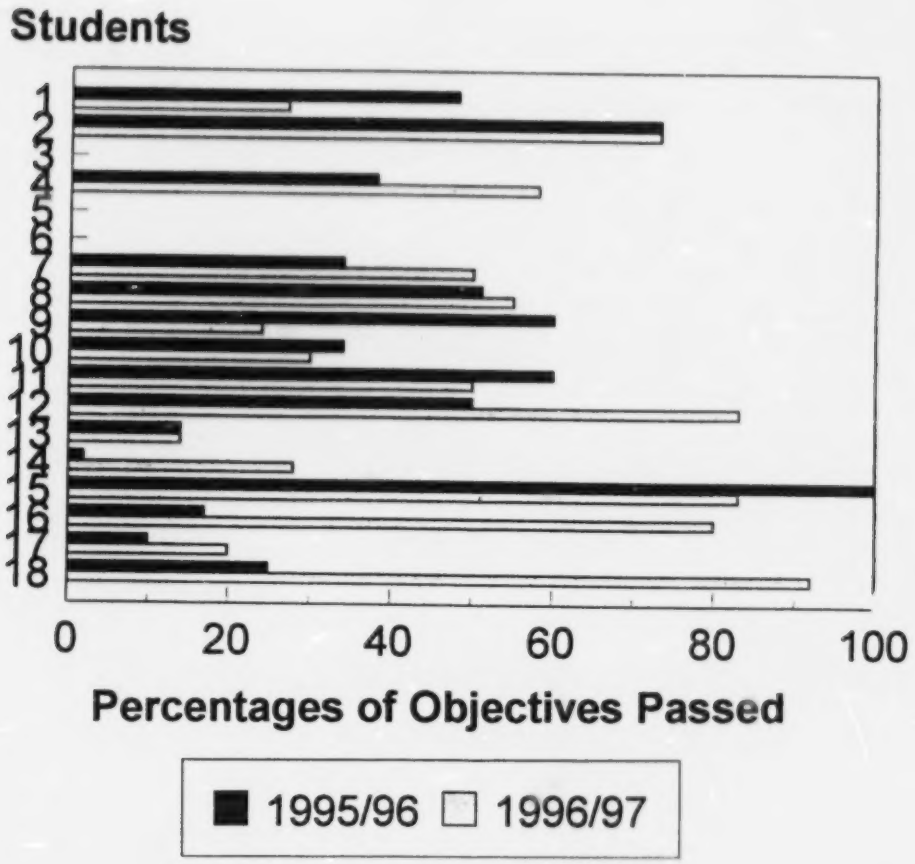

Figure 4. I.E.P. objectives met during 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years

As seen in Figure 4, eight students at sites B and C, achieved a higher percent of objectives passed in the first half of 1996-97 school year than passed in the 1995-96 school year. Five students passed a smaller percentage of objectives in the 1996-97 school year than in the 1995-96 school year. Two students passed the same percentage of objectives in the 1996-97 school year as in the 1995-96 school year. Teacher anecdotal notes indicate that as social skill behaviors improved and incidences of inappropriate behaviors decreased, more instructional time was available. It must be noted that I.E.P. goals passed for students numbers three, five, and six are not shown on the graph. Due to these students moving from the school district, their records were no longer available.

There were some academic gains noted at site A-1 from preintervention grades to postintervention grades as seen in Appendix Q. The fourth grade students' academic progress was calculated by averaging the students numerical grades. This resulted in a 4% overall academic gain for the entire class. Individual gains of 12 students ranged from 1% to 12% and five students' grades decreased from 1% to 5%. The three students who were noted to have made significant social skills gains, as shown in Figure 1, also made academic gains of 12 %, 3 %, and 5% respectively. Also noted, in Appendix R, there was a noticeable drop in social skills behavior during the months of October through December. There was also a lack of academic progress during those months. As social skills improved in January, grades improved.

At site A-2, of the four students who made the greatest gains in social skills, three of them also made significant gains in Language Arts class. Each of the three students improved one letter grade from preintervention to postintervention analysis. In Language Arts and Social Studies, 70% of the students either maintained or raised their academic grades as seen in

Appendix R. Individuals did improve work habits, but the student report card does not reflect this growth. Teacher/researcher data showed that when some students did not use appropriate social skills, their grades declined. The one student who exhibited the greatest number of inappropriate behaviors also failed two classes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data of social skills improvement and academic progress, the students showed that as social skills improved their grades also improved at sites A-1 and A-2. Students at both sites showed improvement in behaviors, even though many demonstrated age appropriate social skills at the start of the implementation program. According to teacher anecdotal notes, teacher time and energy devoted to correcting inappropriate behaviors decreased, allowing more time for teaching and learning. The social skills taught during direct instruction sessions did transfer to other academic settings. Student time-on-task increased and academic engagement improved.

A notable increase was seen in the students' listening skill behaviors. As a result of direct instruction and practice of listening skills, students listen, react, and respond with greater insight than the teacher/researchers would expect from other students of this same age. For these populations, listening was the most beneficial social skill taught in the program. The students demonstrated more academic growth because their listening skills increased.

At the fourth grade level, site A-1, it was noted that as social skills improved so did academic performance. In the same sense, as social skills decreased, academic performance also decreased. The data also supported a direct relationship between direct instruction of social skills and academic performance. The four special education students who were included in this

fourth grade classroom at the beginning of the implementation of the program were eventually removed due to I.E. P. time requirements. These four students showed a decrease in social skill behaviors and academic performance when they no longer received direct instruction of social skills. It may also be noted that students demonstrated age appropriate social skill behaviors while under the supervision of other teachers in the building. These teachers commented to the teacher/researcher that they had seen a noticeable growth in social skill behaviors as compared to other fourth grade students. As a result of the implementation of direct instruction of social skills, the teacher/researcher noted a decrease in the time spent on repeating instructions and eliminating inappropriate classroom behaviors. This provided more time for academic instruction and on task behaviors.

The data support the need for the direct instruction of social skills. The students did make personal and academic growth as a result of direct instruction. At the sixth grade level, more students have prior knowledge about social skills than do many younger students. This may support the reason for more individual growth than that of the group as a whole.

The teacher/researchers at sites B and C, noted an increase in social skill behaviors for the majority of the students. It was noted, however, that the students demonstrated these behaviors most efficiently in the presence of the teacher/researchers. According to anecdotal notes, it is difficult for the students to exhibit carry-over of learned skills. As long as the students were in the presence of the teacher/researchers, there appeared to be a carry-over of appropriate skills to other settings. In the presence of learned cues and incentives, the students in sites B and C, were able to demonstrate adequate social skill behaviors. It was found that these cues and incentives were necessary for students' success. When students were with other

staff, who were not using the cues and incentives, more inappropriate behaviors were noted. In anecdotal notes the teacher/researchers observed that use of appropriate cues by other staff did remind the students to use correct behaviors. It also seems that the students' disability had a direct relationship to their ability to demonstrate age appropriate social skills at any given time. Medication also appeared to play an important role in a student's ability to demonstrate appropriate social skills. When the student appeared not to be appropriately medicated, there was a decrease in social skill behaviors.

The use of "suitcase" activities to bridge the gap between home and school, proved to be beneficial for the T.M.H. students. Anecdotal notes reflect that parents of these students responded positively to being involved in the social skills learning process. The parents expressed support for the program and indicated they would like to continue receiving "suitcase" activities (see Apendix O).

With this population of students, on task behavior is generally maintained at a high level because of the teacher/researchers' ability to intervene when needed. A small group, five students to one teacher/pupil ratio, enabled the teacher/researchers to ensure that students maintained topic and took their turns. Therefore, this was not perceived as an area of difficulty for students at sites B and C.

Academic skills improved in some of the students at sites B and C as measured by the number of passed I.E.P. objectives (Figure 4). It may be noted that nine of the fifteen students passed at least 50 percent of their planned objectives for the year prior to the completion of the current school year. This is a noticeable gain over the number of objectives passed by these same students in the previous school year. This may indicate that the improvement of social

skill behaviors in these students allowed them to take better advantage of lessons taught due to more age appropriate listening and cooperative learning skills. With the demonstration of more appropriate social skill behaviors, the teacher/researchers were able to spend more time teaching academic skills as opposed to dealing with inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, we can assume that more I.E.P objectives will be passed by the end of this current school year.

As teacher/researchers, we believe the lack of age appropriate social skill behaviors is detrimental to students' learning. Our action research in this area has served to reinforce this belief. In order for students to successfully use cooperative learning strategies in the classroom, they must display appropriate social skills. Because students best learn these skills when direct instruction is employed by the teacher, we recommend using a direct instruction format in the classroom.

Upon reflection, we found our research methods to be very subjective and therefore difficult to analyze. A more structured approach using observations with well defined criteria would provide a more objective analysis. This may be accomplished by using a commercially developed social skills observation checklist or by teacher/researchers developing an objective checklist.

Another recommendation for future teacher/researchers would be to limit the number of targeted social skill behaviors. Due to the time constraints of the program (five months), the teacher/reseachers concluded that to effectively teach and practice these skills fewer skills should be taught during the time frame. Because listening and cooperative learning skills proved to be the most beneficial for academic growth, these should be the targeted skills.

It was also found by the teacher/reasearchers of the T.M.H. students at sites B and C that parent involvement was an asset to the program. The use of the "suitcase" activities for this age level was considered to be a positive way to inform parents about social skill activities occurring in the classroom. In this way the parents had an opportunity to reinforce the learned social skill behaviors in their home. We therefore, recommend that parent involvement be included in future programming.

At the fourth and sixth grade levels, sites A-1 and A-2, the teacher/researchers found that the parents chose not to become involved in the homework activities to the degree expected by the teacher/researchers. However, the newsletters were considered to be helpful in keeping parents informed regarding the social skills program. Therefore, we recommend keeping parents informed through newsletters or similar methods.

In conclusion, we, as teacher/researchers, recommend the use of direct instruction for teaching age appropriate social skill behaviors. Furthermore, we recommend that teaching appropriate social skill behaviors be incorporated as an integral part of the curriculum. This program was found to reduce inappropriate behaviors and thereby reduced the amount of time the teacher spent correcting these behaviors. In so doing, more time was available for academic instruction and resulted in student academic and personal growth.

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Appendix A
Teacher Survey
Classroom Behaviors
And Raw Data

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SUBJECT AREA(S): _____

GRADE LEVEL: _____

Listed below you will find a number of statements describing student behaviors. Please mark the number that best describes your class according to each statement. It is important to mark the frequency of the observed behaviors and the degree to which students exhibit each behavior for each item using the 1-4 Likert scale. Thank you for your cooperation.

LISTENING

1. Eye Contact

Students stop working and visually attend to the speaker.

A. 3 5 12 7

_____1_____2_____3_____4_____

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 2 5 13 6

_____1_____2_____3_____4_____

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

2. Follows Verbal Directions

Students begin after initial directions.

A. 2 9 7 9

_____1_____2_____3_____4_____

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 2 3 12 9

_____1_____2_____3_____4_____

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

3. Appropriate Body Language

Students refrain from using distracting behaviors.

A. 2 8 14 3

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 2 5 14 5

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

ON TASK BEHAVIORS

4. Maintaining Topic

Students remain on task for specified amount of time.

A. 3 7 9 8

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 1 9 8 7

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

5. Group Participation

Students maintain active involvement in group work without teach reminders.

A. 3 8 11 4

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 2 8 11 4

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

6. Group Contribution

Students provide information and/or take turns during group activity.

A. 0 8 11 6

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 0 9 11 4

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

7. Maintaining Self-Control

Students follow established rules for group activities.

A. 0 7 11 8

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 1 4 14 6

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

8. Six-Inch Voices

Students maintain appropriate volume when speaking.

A. 1 9 10 6

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 1 8 12 4

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

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9. Taking Turns

Students allow others to participate in the group activity.

A. 0 4 13 9

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 0 5 13 7

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

10. Physical Aggression

Hitting, Tripping, Pushing, Pulling, Biting, Scratching, Bumping, Spitting

A. 11 12 2 2

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 11 13 2 0

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

11. Verbal Aggression

Put Downs, Inappropriate Language

A. 9 11 4 3

1 2 3 4

rarely observed behavior — frequently observed behavior

B. 11 11 4 0

1 2 3 4

very few students exhibit behavior — most students exhibit behavior

12. Talking Out/Inappropriate Noises
Interruptions, Yelling, Screaming

A.	6	10	7	4
	1	2	3	4
	rarely observed behavior			frequently observed behavior
B.	8	14	2	2
	1	2	3	4
	very few students exhibit behavior			most students exhibit behavior

Please comment on the following:

In my experience, classroom behaviors are/are not connected to academic achievement because . . .

Appendix B
Parent Survey
And Raw Data

Grade Level: _____ Date: _____

- Please circle the number on the line that best describes your child.

1. Eye Contact
   Your child looks at you when you speak to him/her.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 0 Sometimes 40 Always 11
2. Follows Verbal Directions
   Your child follows your directions immediately.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 3 Sometimes 43 Always 5
3. Appropriate Body Language
   Your child is able to pay attention to you.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 0 Sometimes 38 Always 13
4. Task Completion
   Your child completes a job within a specified time without reminders.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 8 Sometimes 39 Always 4
5. Maintaining Self-Control
   Your child follows your house rules.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 4 Sometimes 33 Always 14
6. Taking Turns
   Your child works/plays well with others.
   1_____2_____3
   Never 1 Sometimes 27 Always 23
7. Are there any behaviors that your child or childs' friends exhibit that you are concerned with?

   _____

   _____

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Appendix C
Teacher Interview
And Raw Data

Do these factors contribute to the lack of age appropriate social skills in students?

	Yes	No
Poor role models?	24	1
Lack of appropriate role models?	24	1
Too much T.V. watching?	25	0
Dissolution of the family unit?	23	2
Lack of appropriate behavior instruction?	25	0
Unclear value focus in the schools?	6	19
Lack of sufficient parental involvement in the school?	25	0

Appendix D
Appropriate Behaviors

Site _____ Date: _____

Record number of times skill observed
Blank indicates skill not observed

	Listening						On Task Behavior						Cooperative Learning			
	eye contact	following verbal directions	appropriate body language				maintaining topic	group participation					group contribution	maintaining self control	six inch voices	taking turns

Appendix E
Inappropriate Behaviors

ite _____ Date _____

Record number of times behavior occurred
Blank indicates behavior not observed

	Physical Aggression								Verbal Aggression				Interruptions	
	hitting	tripping	pushing	pulling	biting	scratching	spitting		inappropriate language	put downs			talking out	yelling/screaming

Appendix F
Group Participation

- Complete each of the following statements, with the appropriate number, which shows how well your group worked together today.

1. We didn't do our jobs well in the area.
2. We sort of did our jobs in this area.
3. We did our jobs in this area but could do better next time.
4. We did our jobs very well in this area.
5. We did our jobs extremely well in this area, we got along well, and have a productive day.

_____ We got right down to business without any problems.

_____ We listened while others read aloud.

_____ We listened while others talked.

_____ We didn't argue or interrupt others.

_____ We took turns.

_____ We encouraged everyone to participate and for their ideas.

_____ We stayed on task.

Appendix G
Criteria Sheet

1 _____ 2 _____ 3
No Way Doing Fine On Fire!

Using the materials provided, create a Dragon Boat that you, as a group, think will float. As a group, plan the boat so that everyone knows the size of all the parts and what the final product should look like. Follow the given criteria to create a seaworthy vessel. You may help one another, but your given roles must be maintained. All must do their share!

Roles:

Checker - Look to make sure all work is correct and of good quality.
Foil Sculptor - Mold and shape the boat.
Clay Sculptor - Mold and shape the rowers.
Oar Technician - Place the oats on the boat. (They must prove seaworthy!)

Group Work:

1. Use of roles _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3
   Each person maintains assigned role.

2. Team discussion and planning _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3
   All members participating.

3. Effective planning _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3
   Each member knows his/her job.

4. On task behavior _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3
   All members maintain given task.

Dragon Boat Criteria (Rubric):

1. One foot long (nose to tail)	1	2	3
2. Dragon shape	1	2	3
3. Boat shape (allows for rowers)	1	2	3
4. Clay rowers	1	2	3
5. Drummer	1	2	3
6. Oars	1	2	3
7. Seaworthy (floats, stays together 1 min.)	1	2	3
8. Number of rowers before sinking	1	2	3
9. Group response	1	2	3

Appendix H
Social Skills Lesson Plan
Reading

Site: A-1

Objective: students will improve their ability to follow verbal directions, to listen until all the directions are given before beginning the task, while working in cooperative reading groups.

Materials: four notecards with the role playing directions wrote on them.

Procedure:

Model the skill first: have a student read the following directions on a note card while the teacher shows the steps in carrying out the directions: **"Pick up the chalk and write on the chalkboard - your name, date of birth, address, names of your family members, and the number of students in the classroom."**

Practice: have children work with their partner with the directions wrote on notecards.

Role Play: 1. go to the east window and open it, erase the board, go to the bird cage and pet Eddie, close the door.
2. go to the classroom library and find a book by Judy Blume, go to the coat hooks and hang up an object that is on the floor, turn off the lights, return to your seat.
3. go to a reading corner and pick up a pillow (put it back down), turn on the fan, pick up a pencil off the floor, wash the board.
4. go to the teacher's desk and sit down, water the plant, hang one of the pumpkins on a paper clip, feed Eddie.

Follow-up: have team members make-up four step directions for each other and role play them.

Appendix I
Pumpkin Day Lesson Plan
Science

Site: A-1

Objectives: Students will work together to complete the "Pumpkin Day" packet in cooperative groups.
Students must use six inch voices at all times
Students will maintain their assigned roles.
Students will share the work load equally.
Students will receive a hands-on experience relating to spices, herbs, and pumpkins.

Roles: Reader, recorder, encourager, organizer (makes sure station is left the way it was found)

Station #1 - Spice Station

Materials needed: a variety of spices and herbs, a variety of cookbooks and reference books. etc., page one in the packet

a) **read the directions** orally and discuss (on page one)
b) **check for understanding** before beginning
c) students must identify at least three spices and three herbs.

Station #2 - Inside the Pumpkin

Materials needed: one large pumpkin with the lid cut open, bowl of water, and paper towels

a) **read the directions** orally and discuss
b) **check for understanding** before beginning

Directions: close your eyes, slowly submerge your hand down inside the pumpkin, move your hand around, be aware of all your senses (smell, touch, taste, hear, and see). How do your finger tips feel? How does your entire hand feel submerged inside the pumpkin? Do the hairs on your hand feel any different? What do you smell? What do you hear as you move you hand around the inside? What does you mind see? Write one paragraph describing this sensation.

Station #3 - Pumpkin Facts

Materials needed: one large pumpkin, bathroom scale, six popsicle sticks with string attached (2 strings too long, 2 strings too short, 2 strings just right) for measuring the circumference, colored chalk to draw pumpkins on the board.

a) **read the directions** orally on page three and discuss
b) **check for understanding** before beginning
c) estimate the circumference and weight of the pumpkin before beginning
d) record the results on the board under the appropriate category

Station #4 - Pumpkin Design and Carving

Materials needed: one large pumpkin for each cooperative team, newspapers, bowl for seeds, pumpkin carving knives,

a) **read the directions** orally on page four and discuss
b) **check for understanding** before beginning
c) vote on best pumpkin face design

Roles: One person cleans out the insides of the pumpkin
One person draws the design on the pumpkin (eyes, nose, mouth etc.)
Each person carves one feature
One person cleans up the newspapers and put down fresh ones for the next team
One person washes the seeds and pumpkin knife

Appendix J
Social Skills Lesson Plan
Social Studies - Chinese Dragon Boats

Site: A-2

Objectives: 1. The students will maintain given roles during group work.

2. The students will use six inch voices.

3. The students will work together without arguing.

4. All students will participate in the given task.

Materials: tin foil, clay, toothpicks or art sticks, criteria sheet, wadding pool

Procedure:

After researching the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival and reading *The Terrible Dragon*, divide the students into task groups of four or five students. Each group is given a criteria sheet which will be used to assess the group work. Discuss the criteria sheet and then assign individual roles to each group member. The assignment is for each group to create a Chinese Dragon Boat using the given materials and the criteria sheet. After all boats are completed, the class will hold a contest to determine the most sea-worthy vessel. Using a small wadding pool as an authentic simulation, each group will sail their boat to determine its strength and construction abilities. After the simulation, each group discusses and evaluates their cooperative group skills. Then they write their assessment.

Appendix K
Social Skills Lesson Plan
Language Arts - Simultaneous Talking (Drama)

Site: A-2

Objectives: 1. The students will listen to one another to create a dialogue.

2. The students will listen to the dialogue and add appropriate hand gestures that relay the meaning of the spoken words.

Needed: Four students: two speakers, two hand controllers

Procedure:

Four students stand together in front of the class. Two students stand facing one another and create a dialogue on a given topic. Each of the other two students stands behind a speaker and holds on to the wrists of the speaker. Each hand controller moves the arms to create various hand gestures that enhance the dialogue. Throughout the dialogue, the students must focus and listen closely to the speaker. Listening becomes more difficult as the sketch becomes more humorous.

The audience listens and observers the sketch , looking for examples of good listening skills exhibited by the participants. After each sketch, a discussion is held. The participants express what was easy or difficult about listening to one another, and the observers note the good skills they saw being used by the participants.

Appendix L
Social Skills Lesson Plan
Language

Sites: B and C

Objective: The students will follow one step verbal directions

Materials: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
Flannel board
Flannel caterpillar parts
- four green circles (body)
- one black circle (eye)
- two antennae
- one red mouth

Procedure:

The teacher will read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book to the students. The teacher will then discuss the caterpillar (shape, color, and size) with the students and demonstrate the assembly of the flannel caterpillar. The teacher will then give each student a part of the caterpillar. Using one step directions, the teacher will instruct the students to place the appropriate part of the caterpillar on the flannel board. Repeat this activity three times to reinforce direction following.

Suitcase activity for follow-up:

A parent letter explaining direction following will be sent home in the "suitcase" envelope. Materials and directions for completing a direction following activity with their child will also be included. The activity will be based on the direction following activity of assembling a caterpillar from the lesson during the day. The parents will be asked to complete the activity with their child and return it in the envelope to school the next day.

Appendix M
Cooperative Learning Lesson Plan
Reading

Sites: B and C

Objective: students will recognize that print carries meaning

Materials: Brown bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?
11 X 14 white construction paper with bear outline

animal pictures	rubber cement	sentence strips
Big Book Club Banner	paintbrushes	brown tempera paint
Big Book Club pins	11 X 14 tag board	scissors
large rings	hole punch	marker

Procedure:

Day 1: The teacher and students will hang the Big Book Club Banner and put on their Big Book Club pins. The teacher will read the book to the students emphasizing that the bear must look to see the animals. The teacher will point out the words of the story to the children in order to show that print carries meaning. The teacher will reread the book with the children, encouraging them to "read" the pages with him/her.

The teacher will explain and model the cooperative learning jobs of materials manager and encourager. The materials manager will pass out the papers and paintbrushes to the group. The students will be directed to paint the bear. The teacher will cue the encourager to reinforce the good behaviors of the group.

Day 2: The teacher and students will hang the Big Book Club Banner and put on their pins. The teacher and students will "read" the book together. The teacher will assign the roles of materials manager and encourager to two different children. The materials manager will pass out the brown bear paintings and scissors. Each child will cut out his/her brown bear and choose an animal picture provided by the teacher. In book fashion, the students will glue their brown bear on one tag board and their animal picture on the facing tag board using a round robin format and sharing the glue. The teacher will cue the encourager to reinforce the good behaviors of the group.

Day 3: The teacher and students will hang the Big Book Club Banner and put on their pins. The teacher and students will "read" the book together. The teacher will assign the roles of materials manager and encourager to two different children. The materials manger will pass out the sentence strips. Each child will "read" the sentence strips and glue them to the appropriate page using a round robin format. Using markers, the students will sign their names to the illustrated page. The group will design an appropriate cover for the book. The teacher will cue the encourager to reinforce the good behaviors of the group.

Day 4: The teacher and students will hang the Big Book Club Banner and put on their pins. The teacher and students assemble the big book using a hole punch and rings employing a round robin format. The teacher and students will "read" the big book together. The teacher will reinforce that print carries meaning.

THE 6B INSIDER

September 3, 1996 Volume 2

OFF TO A GREAT START

Our 6B class has stepped into the new year together as a team. We have taken time to find out about one another by listening to each one share their summer nostalgia items. After listening to the varied interests, I think many found some common interests with their new classmates. As their teacher, I have enjoyed the first weeks together, and I look forward to the many more we have ahead of us.

SOCIAL SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM

This year I am in my second and final year of working towards my Master's Degree. I will be glad to have the hard work behind me at the end of this year, but until then, I must go forward.

During this school year I am required to implement active research into my teaching classroom. I, along with my three other research partners, have decided to focus on teaching social skills to our students. We have stated, and researched others who have stated, that by directly teaching students to appropriately use social skills, their academic performance will increase as a result. Therefore, your child will be learning social skills throughout the year. Your child will not be graded on these skills learned in class, nor on any reinforcement activities done at home. Also, please be assured that your child's identity will remain strictly confidential. I will not use your child's name or personal information in my research data. Additionally, the implementation of this program will not take away from any of the academic requirements of sixth grade.

Some of the social skills we will learn in class are as follows:

Listening Skills (eye contact, following verbal directions, appropriate body language)

On Task Behaviors (maintaining topic, group participation)

Cooperative Learning Skills (group contribution, maintaining self-control, using quiet voices, taking turns).

As an educator, I am continually evaluating my own performance and constantly trying to improve how I teach, and how I can best meet the needs of my students. I strongly believe that as a result of teaching appropriate social skills, inappropriate behaviors in the classroom will decrease. Therefore, students will better be able to concentrate on improving their academic performance.

If you have any questions, please contact me. I would like your support and your reaction to this research implementation. Hopefully, this direct instruction will carry over to other situations and you will see improvements at home. I have sent home a voluntary survey for you to complete. Please take a few minutes to fill it out, and then return it this week. Thank you.

CALENDAR DATES

September 6 - 6th Grade field trip to hear storytellers pass on the oral tradition. This ties in directly to the oral tradition unit in Language Arts class.

September 10, 11 - Language Arts oral tradition presentations due. Each student and his/her partner will present a story to the class using storytelling techniques.

September 24 - STOMP, a Broadway production, performs at the Peoria Civic Center at 7:30. Families are invited to go. This performance will tie in directly to a multi-curriculum study including social studies, fine arts, and Language Arts. (A letter was sent home explaining more about this wonderful opportunity.)

September 26 - MGS Open House, 7:00

September 27 - Midterm

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HOME FOLLOWING DIRECTION PRACTICE

This week we are continuing to work on listening and following directions. These skills are important for students to be successful in school and in other everyday situations. Think of how many times you followed directions this week!

SUITCASE ACTIVITY

Use the directions below to help your child build listening and direction-following skills.

2-Step Directions

1. clap your hands, stomp your feet
2. touch your ear, touch your nose
3. touch the door, stomp your feet
4. jump up and down, touch the wall
5. blink your eyes, smile

Included in this envelope is a chart to keep track of the times your child was able to follow your directions. Say the above direction and then reward your child for correctly following it. You may use the enclosed stickers for rewards. Please send the chart back to school tomorrow so your child may share his/her experience with us.

Now, have fun with your child by making up your own directions for each other to follow.

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I CAN FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Appendix P

When I Am a Good Listener...

(Sing to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell.")

I sit up straight and tall,
I sit up straight and tall,
When I am a good listener,
I sit up straight and tall.

I watch the one who talks,
I watch the one who talks,
When I am a good listener,
I watch the one who talks.

I keep my body still,
I keep my body still,
When I am a good listener,
I keep my body still.

I do not interrupt,
I do not interrupt,
When I am a good listener,
I do not interrupt.

Appendix Q

Math	Language	Spelling	Social Studies	Reading	Science	Math	Language	Spelling	Social Studies	Reading	Science	Math	Language	Spelling	Social Studies	Reading
95	94	100	91	89	99	94	89	98	94	100	99	93	94	98	98	92
82	78	74	73		18	80	74	75	76		70	80	73	86	23	78
95	98	98	84	75	92	93	83	98	92	84	88	99	89	98	99	87
85	96	96	86	79	87	92	95	94	85	77	88	93	94	96	90	88
74	76	91	P	73	76	84	73	90	61	80	74	P	78	91	75	P
						M	O	U	E	O						
84	95	97	81	90	83	89	95	97	88	96	87	87	90	94	96	91
87	74	97	74	73	76	91	84	92	70	71	73	93	66	94	93	72
89	54	67	53	73	60	81	73	68	68	53	83	77	61	89	70	48
89	88	99	85	84	77	95	93	98	91	85	94	97	85	93	85	93
85	95	90	65	84	82	88	90	98	88	85	81	89	87	95	93	89
83	94	87	68	86	71	77	74	88	87		79	80	75	75	80	78
90	98	99	85		87	91	90	94	81	78	86	87	92	89	87	83
79	89	90	80	72	79	92	85	92	81	81	71	84	77	94	91	79
86	98	95	89	72	78	94	93	96	82	80	88	92	97	98	99	99
74	89	73	76	70	80	74	46	81	56	63	62	87	77	74	72	
92	99	86	87	90	96	98	91	91	99	87	95	95	91	87	98	87
92	99	92	91	91	94	94	99	97	95	101	96	96	90	96	97	95
88	91	98	80	79	88	89	87	87	84	77	79	88		91	86	73

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Appendix R

Site A-2 Grades, 1996-97

Student	L/A-1	S.S.-1	Ave.-1	L/A-2	S.S.-2	Ave.-2	L/A-3	S.S.-3	Ave.-3
1.	91	85	88	84	79	81.5	84	75	79.5
2.	82	70	76	75	76	75.5	77	77	77
3.	82	80	81	78	70	74	71	70	70.5
4.	72	83	77.5	74	75	74.5	81	77	79
5.	83	81	82	81	78	79.5	75	79	77
6.	88	92	90	85	91	88	85	82	83.5
7.	85	92	88.5	81	82	81.5	89	77	83
8.	96	95	95.5	93	89	91	95	93	94
9.	91	95	93	93	89	91	93	85	89
10.	91	96	93.5	96	93	94.5	93	88	90.5
11.	80	83	81.5	82	75	78.5	86	68	77
12.	96	95	95.5	97	90	93.5	97	93	95
13.	98	98	98	99	98	98.5	96	94	95
14.	96	96	96	96	93	94.5	93	91	92
15.	94	96	95	96	94	95	89	93	91
16.	81	86	83.5	84	78	81	82	80	81
17.	87	84	85.5	90	89	89.5	87	85	86
18.	95	96	95.5	97	90	93.5	95	95	95
19.	89	80	84.5	90	85	87.5	91	78	84.5
20.	96	96	96	96	90	93	93	85	89
21.	88	93	90.5	89	89	89	85	89	87
22.	95	98	96.5	95	86	90.5	93	90	91.5
23.	75	77	76	84	80	82	80	77	78.5
24.	93	92	92.5	92	89	90.5	93	85	89
25.	78	93	85.5	89	85	87	83	88	85.5
26.	92	97	94.5	95	92	93.5	95	90	92.5
27.	99	98	98.5	99	98	98.5	96	96	96